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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to compare adult learning experiences within formal educational programs in rural areas with those in urban areas, predominantly at the postsecondary level. It focused on the phenomenon of adult learning in rural settings by analyzing participation rates, needs assessment data, interest inventories, program evaluations, and research studies of postsecondary continuing education programs. Information reported in the literature of adult education was compared and contrasted with findings of studies conducted in a nine-county rural area of West Central Minnesota. Findings indicated that there is no consensus that adult learning occurs in formal settings at the same frequency in rural and urban areas. Participation in both settings was most heavily concentrated in age categories below age 55. In urban areas the focus of adult learners was on formal credit; in rural areas adults focused on noncredit activities. Motivation for adults in urban areas was education for vocational advancement; adults in rural areas were motivated by personal development and self-improvement. Barriers to education existed more often for rural adults. The most serious were distance (access), lack of adequate finances, and lack of adequate advising and counseling. (YLB)

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Comparative Patterns In Rural and Urban Adult Education Programs: Participation, Focus and Barriers

a paper presented at the

1981 National Adult Education Conference
Anaheim, California

October 29, 1981

by

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since the release of the report, "Less Time More Options" by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1971 (4), much attention at the post-secondary education level has been focused upon continuing education programs specifically, and the education of adults generally. Subsequently in 1974, according to the Pitchell Report (24), a new majority had emerged among the student body of post-secondary education--the adult, part-time student--and a renewed interest in adult and continuing education on the part of all of post-secondary education was kindled. This sparked new program development and the expansion of existing programs, in the hopes of capturing a piece of the "market." Programs found successful in one part of the country were quickly transplanted to other areas, and continuing education programs proliferated.

However, most of the "success stories" of growing adult and continuing education enrollments and innovations emanated from programs conducted in urban areas and little attention was paid to the educational experiences of rural adults. (This is not to say that successful programs in rural areas were not conducted--rather, the literature focused upon urban areas.) What, however, has been going on in rural areas that was similar or different to adult learning experiences in urban areas? That question provides the basic framework for this study. Further, the study focuses upon the experiences of adult learning within formal educational programs, predominately at the post-secondary level, but draws upon information and data from informal educational settings and community education (secondary) programs. Essentially, the study is an analysis of selected literature and then incorporates previous investigations conducted by the author and his colleagues, and is reported in the context of ongoing research. The predominant rural setting analyzed in this study was a nine county area of West Central Minnesota.

NATURE OF THE STUDY

This study focused upon the phenomenon of adult learning in rural settings by analyzing participation rates, needs assessment data, interest inventories, program evaluations, and research studies of post-secondary continuing education programs. The basic hypothesis pursued in this investigation was:

> Adult learning at the post-secondary educational level takes place in both rural and urban settings at about the same rate of frequency, however, adults in urban areas tend to focus their efforts toward learning activities leading to vocational preparation or advancement, whereas, adults in rural areas

focus their attention on learning experiences that enhance personal development, self-improvement and special interests, e.g., hobbies and recreation.

For the purpose of this study, attention was drawn to studies of adult participation in formal educational settings at the post-secondary level, however, it was noted that considerable learning takes place in the "educational periphery" as reported in the literature by Tough (26).

A secondary premise pursued in this investigation was:

> Adults in rural areas more often experience significant barriers to post-secondary educational opportunities than do adults in urban areas.

With these two guiding suppositions, the study was undertaken by analyzing existing information reported in the literature of adult education and comparing and contrasting the findings with studies conducted in a rural area--West Central Minnesota.

In pursuing the hypothesis that adult learning takes place in a rural area at about the same frequency as it occurs in an urban area, but with a different emphasis, the following approach was taken:

1. the author reviewed selected literature consisting of:
   a. studies of participation rates of adults engaged in formal continuing education programs,
   b. evaluation reports of adult education programs,
   c. reports of needs assessment concerning the stated educational needs of adults, and
   d. demographic data related to the adult population.
2. the author assisted in the design, implementation and analysis of original research focusing upon perceived needs for additional education of adults in West Central Minnesota.
3. the author conducted evaluation surveys of adults participating in continuing education programs at the University of Minnesota, Morris.

In pursuing the secondary premise--that adults in rural areas more often experience significant barriers to educational opportunities than adults in urban areas, the following methodology was applied:

1. the author reviewed selected literature consisting of:
   a. studies of actual barriers encountered by adults in rural and urban areas, and
   b. studies of perceived barriers of adults in rural areas.
2. the author assisted in the design, implementation and analysis of original investigations conducted to ascertain the real and perceived barriers that adults face in pursuing educational opportunities in a rural area.

In implementing the review of the literature to test both suppositions, selected studies, reports and information were gathered from international, national, and regional sources.

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

FREQUENCY OF PARTICIPATION

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) sponsors a triennial supplement to the Current Population Survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census which queries the 56,000 households in the survey on participation in adult education; these surveys have been conducted in May of 1969, 1972, 1975 and 1978. The National Center for Education Statistics (1, 27) has assembled data on adult participation in formal educational settings and reported an increase of over 5 million adults engaged in learning activities from 1969 to 1978; from over 13 million in 1969 to over 18 million in 1978. These data are available from the Adult and Vocational Education Surveys Branch of the National Center for Education Statistics and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Increase in Adult Population (17 years and over), in Participants in Adult Education Who Were Not Full-time Students in High School or College: United States, Years Ending May 1969, May 1972, May 1975, and May 1978.

Population characteristic	Number in population (in thousands) 1969	1972	1975	1978	Percent increase 1969-1978	Average annual percent increase 1969-1978
Total adults	130,215	138,865	146,502	154,496	18.6	1.96
Participants in adult education	13,041	15,734	17,059	18,197	39.5	3.96
Full-time adult students in high school or college	10,654	11,602	11,078	11,553	8.4	.95

Source: Participation in Adult Education Final Report 1975 and The Condition of Education Statistical Report, 1980 Edition, National Center for Education Statistics. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, D.C. 1980.

The information presented in Table 1 shows that growth in adult education enrollments has occurred. However, when viewed as a percentage of the total population, 17 years and older, adult education enrollment growth has not been overwhelming. In 1969, 10% of the adult population was enrolled in adult education, in 1972, 11.3%, in 1975, 11.6%; and in 1978, 11.8%. Although adult education enrollment increased 39.6% during the period, or, at a rate of almost twice the

growth of the overall adult population increase, the rate of growth in participation in adult education has declined. The growth rate of participation in adult education has declined from an annual rate of 6.9% between 1969 and 1972 to an annual rate of 2.2% during 1975 to 1978; or stated another way, the rate of increase in participation has declined by 68% from 1969 to 1978. NCES further gathered information on participation by age category of adults engaged in formal learning activities; this information appears in Table 2.

Table 2. Increase in Adult Population (17 years and over) and in Participants in Adult Education Who Were Not Full-time Students in High School or College, by Age Group: United States, Years Ending May 1969, May 1972, May 1975, and May 1978.

	Number in population (in thousands)				Percent increase	Average annual percent increase
	1969	1972	1975	1978	1969-1978	1969-1978
Age group:						
17-34 years:						
Total population	48,270	54,424	60,038	64,611	33.9	3.4
Participants in adult education	6,956	8,644	9,604	10,159	46.1	4.6
35-54 years:						
Total population	45,484	45,715	45,871	46,787	2.9	.3
Participants in adult education	5,037	5,727	5,829	6,091	20.9	2.2
55 years and over:						
Total population	36,498	38,726	40,693	43,098	18.1	1.9
Participants in adult education	1,048	1,363	1,627	1,946	85.7	7.7

Source: Participation in Adult Education Final Report 1975. National Center for Education Statistics. U.S. Government Printing Office. Washington, D.C. 1978, and The Condition of Education 1980 Edition.

A further analysis of the NCES data shows the frequency of participation in adult education activities by metropolitan status of the participants. This information is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Participation in Adult Education by Metropolitan Area: 1975 and 1978.

Metropolitan Status	1975		1978	
	Number (in thousands)	Percent of Total	Number (in thousands)	Percent of Total
Total Population in SMSA*	101,098	68.6	104,611	67.7
Participants in Adult Education	12,694	74.4	13,342	73.3
Total Population not in SMSA	46,304	31.4	49,885	32.3
Participants in Adult Education	4,364	25.6	4,856	26.7

* Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area

Essentially, the data in Table 3 show that two-thirds of all adult education enrollments occur within areas designated as Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA). Only one-third of the enrollments occur in rural areas. (Generally accepted criteria for a SMSA are: 1) at least one city of 50,000; 2) several contiguous cities of 25,000; or, 3) a population density of 1,000 per square mile). However, if one compares these participation patterns between 1975 and 1978 these data show that the rate of participation in urban areas has dropped from 74.4% of the total of all adult education enrollments in 1975 to 73.3% in 1978. Or stated another way, enrollments in rural adult education programs has increased from 31.4% of all adult education enrollments in 1975 to 32.3% in 1978. This represents an increase of 5.1% in participation in urban areas and an 11.3% increase in participation in rural areas between 1975 and 1978.

In 1980 the National Center for Education Statistics (41) released a report showing that the number of students over age 24 had increased 62% between 1972 and 1977 with women accounting for the major proportion of the increase. These data are impressive and suggest a high frequency of participation by adults in formal educational settings. However, it should be noted here that not all adult learning takes place in formal settings. Allen Tough (26) has stated that almost every adult engages in several learning projects each year, and he estimates that 70% are of a self-directed nature and planned by the learner him or herself.

In comparing part-time enrollment in higher education in the Fall of 1974, Valley (7) found that there was less participation in formal credit educational programs in rural areas as there were in urban areas. This information is shown in Table 4. This assumes that California and Illinois are more urban states.

Table 4. Comparison of Part-time Enrollments in Higher Education: Fall 1974.

State	% Part-time Enrollments
California	53.1
Illinois	42.3
Missouri	34.7
Nebraska	29.1
Minnesota	28.3
Iowa	17.6
Total U.S.	37.2

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, reported in Higher Education Daily December 6, 1975 p. 3-4.

In attempting to work through the issue of coordinating further education programs with local communities in Canada, Long (16) reports that the Province of Alberta has experienced a low rate of adult participation in formal education, particularly in the rural communities. His estimates of participation in formal education by adults in selected countries are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Estimated Percentage of Participation in Adult Education Programs in Selected Countries

Country	% Participation
Canada	8
England	10
Germany	
United States	[illegible]
Sweden	25
Finland	85

Source: Long, James S. Alberts's Local Further Education Councils, Adult Leadership Vol. 25 No. 3, November 1976.

This apparent interest in credit (urban) and non-credit (rural) participation in post-secondary education is somewhat further substantiated by a 1981 report of the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board (21), which showed that non-"extension" part-time students in all of Minnesota's post-secondary educational institutions increased 55% from 1973 to 1978 for a total of 49,000. According to a 1976 report of the Minnesota Higher Education Board, over one-half of the states part-time students are at the University of Minnesota. In the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area, the participation rate of part-time students was 20.2%, whereas, in a nine-county area in West Central Minnesota, the corresponding participation rate was only 7.1%. It should be remembered, however, that these statistics relate to formal credit registrations and do not take into account non-credit programs. According to the Minnesota Poll, published in the November 27, 1978 Minneapolis Tribune, two out of three Minnesota adults were interested in continuing their education. Of the 613 individuals sampled, 116 resided in rural areas, and 65% of these stated they were definitely interested in taking courses to continue their education. Business related courses accounted for the largest subject area of interest (19%).

An analysis of enrollment in the University of Minnesota, Morris Continuing Education Program was completed which showed a 248% increase in participants during 1980-81 over 1974-75. As of June 30, 1981, the total registrations during the 1980-81 academic year for the University of Minnesota, Morris program were: 878

in credit programs and 1744 in non-credit programs; an increase over the previous year of 36% and 10% respectively.

Together, these studies suggest that adults in a rural area are indeed interested in learning activities, however, there seems to be a propensity to participate in non-credit programs rather than in credit programs.

FOCUS OF LEARNING EFFORTS

In his classic study conducted a number of years ago, Houle (8) determined that there were three types of adult learners in their orientations toward learning: 1) goal-oriented, 2) activity-oriented, and 3) learning-oriented.

Boshier (3) suggested that all adult education participants are goal-oriented and related satisfaction and focus to Maslow's hierarchy. In recent years, Knowles (14) and Tough (26) have explored the focus of adult learning projects vis-a-vis self-directed learning. All have found that adults enter learning situations with a particular focus that seems to fit their immediate needs.

Knox (15) states that adults enter continuing education activities with global concerns for growth and for several fairly specific reasons, i.e., to educate themselves, to find answers, to solve problems and to improve their ability to know and feel and act.

What, then, is the specific focus of adults in both rural and urban areas? Are they different in their focus toward learning, especially in formal settings?

The National Center for Education Statistics reports data on over 18 million adults participating in educational programs in 1978. The information presented in Table 6, on the following page, shows the main reason for enrolling by the type of educational provider.

At the University of Minnesota, Kanun (13) found that during 1979-80 81.7% of all continuing education credit registrations (84,560) are from the Twin Cities Metropolitan area, whereas, 18.4% of all non-credit conference registrations (8,514) are from "out-state" areas. During 1978, under the sponsorship of the University of Minnesota's Continuing Education and Extension Research Department, a study was conducted which compared the motivational reasons for students enrolling in University of Minnesota programs in the Twin Cities area and in the Morris area (West Central Minnesota). Personal or cultural enrichment ranked number one in importance for Morris area enrollees and number four for Twin Cities enrollees (11). Perhaps this suggests that the earning of formal credit is not as important to rural adults as to urban adults. This is generally consistent with the findings of Johnstone and Rivera (10) of nearly two decades ago who concluded that the earning of formal credit is not an important motive in the educational behavior of American adults.

Table 6. Main Reason for Taking Adult Education Course, by Course Administrator: Year Ending May 1978.

Course Administrator	Total	Advance in Current Job	Get New Job	Other Job Related	American Citizenship	General Education	Personal, Social, or Other Non-job Related	Not Reported
				Percentage Distribution Of Courses				
Total	100.0	38.9	10.5	3.3	0.2	12.5	33.9	0.7
Elementary, junior, or high school	100.0	12.5	8.2	1.3	1.0	21.5	55.2	.4
2-year college or vocational-technical institute	100.0	26.4	17.8	2.9	.1	21.4	30.7	.5
4-year college or university	100.0	50.5	14.1	3.1	0	16.2	15.5	.6
Vocational, trade, or business school	100.0	42.7	20.0	3.9	0	11.0	22.3	.2
Tutor or private instructor	100.0	16.7	4.9	2.2	.1	5.5	70.0	.5
Business or industry	100.0	74.4	5.8	4.9	0	3.0	11.7	.2
Labor organization or professional association	100.0	84.8	3.2	4.6	0	1.6	5.5	.2
Government agency	100.0	46.5	4.7	5.5	.2	5.9	36.2	.7
Private community organization	100.0	12.3	1.9	1.7	0	7.5	76.2	.4
Other	100.0	29.2	8.6	4.3	.1	8.5	47.8	1.5
Did not know or not reported	100.0	34.8	7.0	2.2	.3	10.9	37.3	7.8

Note: Details may not add to totals because of rounding

Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, National Center for Education Statistics, Participation in Adult Education and unpublished tabulations. The Condition of Education 1980 Edition.

NCES does not present this information by metropolitan status, which would allow for comparison between rural and urban participants.

Prior studies conducted by the author on the characteristics of urban adult learners, substantiate a vocational orientation. McCannon (18, 19) found in 1970 and 1972 that approximately 75% of adults attending evening division classes at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa stated their most important reason for enrolling was for career advancement or to prepare for a different job.

In trying to estimate the size of the learning force in Iowa for potential non-traditional programs, a study was conducted and published in 1976 by the Educational Testing Service (7), which showed that an estimated 676,800 adults in Iowa would like additional education. The characteristics of these adults showed that two-thirds were women, only 8% were 50 years or older, and they were predom-

inately residents of metropolitan areas. The results of this study were compared with a 1972 study conducted by the Commission on Non-Traditional Study (7), that showed adults' reasons for wanting to learn; these reasons are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Rank Order of Adults' Reasons for Wanting to Learn

Reason	Iowa, 1976	CN-TS, 1972
To be better informed	1	1
Personal satisfaction	2	2
Improve income	3	4
Prepare for different job	4	3
Current job requirement	5	5

Source: Hamilton, I. Bruce. The Third Century: Post-Secondary Planning for the Non-traditional Learner, Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J. 1976.

According to the Iowa study it was estimated that 250,000 potential adult learners existed in Iowa. The study hypothesized that these learners were predominately in the age range of 20-35, city dwellers, female, and had some prior college experience. The study concluded that a large number of Iowans who are older, who lived in rural areas, whose incomes were low and whose previous education was low, did not feel that further formal education interested them.

During the summer of 1976 a survey was conducted of 3,606 households in West Central Minnesota to determine the perceived needs for education beyond high school by residents of the area. The author served as a consultant to the study team from the Research Coordinating Unit for Vocational Education of the University of Minnesota (6). The results of the study showed that 60% of the area's residents were interested in education for hobbies and special interests and 40% were interested in education for job training purposes. The subject-area categories having the most response by the participants of the study are shown in Table 8 on the following page.

A conclusion drawn from the study was that adults in this rural area of West Central Minnesota are more interested in continuing their education for personal development and self-improvement (60%) than they are for reasons of vocational advancement (40%) through job training.

Each academic quarter since 1975 a student survey (5) has been administered to students attending evening courses at the University of Minnesota, Morris. When asked what was the most important reason for enrolling, an average of 55% indicated they attended for personal enrichment or "just for fun." Only an average of 13% indicated that job training or professional advancement was the most important reason for their enrolling. Of this sample, only 34% indicated they were interested in formal credit. Enrollment in this program has shown a markedly

Table 8. Type of Education Desired by Residents of West Central Minnesota

Hobbies and Special Interest			Job Training		
Rank	Subject Area	%	Rank	Subject Area	%
1	Technical Skills	25.6	1	Office & Accounting	17.1
2	Arts & Crafts	20.7	2	Public Service	14.1
3	Home Skills	17.8	3.5	Health	12.0
4	Recreation	12.9	3.5	Agriculture	12.0
5	Liberal Arts	8.8	5	Construction	9.5
6	Music	7.7	6	Sales & Marketing	7.5
7	Basic Skills	6.3	7	Consumer & Homemaking	5.9
8	Other	.2	8	Other	21.9

Source: Copa, George. Perceived Needs for Education Beyond High School by Residents of Minnesota's West Central Economic Development Region. Fergus Falls, Minnesota, November 1976.

substantial increase of 386% in non-credit registrations and a 42% increase in credit registrations from 1974-75 to 1980-81, to date (non-credit = 44 registrations in 1975 to 1,744 registrations in 1980-81; credit = 620 registrations in 1975 to 878, in 1980-81).

Statistics kept on 438 potential adult students seeking advising and counseling through the Morris Learning Center at the University of Minnesota, Morris during 1980-81 showed that the subject areas of social science and humanities accounted for 45% of the stated areas of interest. Business subjects were of interest to 17.8% of these individuals. Of these 438 adults, 293 or 66.8% were women.

Perhaps this analysis begins to shed some light upon the focus of learning efforts between rural and urban adults. Rural adults seem to focus their efforts toward non-credit personal development, whereas, urban adults seem to participate more readily in credit programs of a vocational nature.

BARRIERS EXPERIENCED

One of the reasons that adults do not avail themselves of more education is because significant barriers exist that prevent them from attending programs.

Valley (7) identifies three types of barriers to expanded adult learning opportunities as: 1) dispositional, e.g., attitudes, beliefs, interests, etc.; 2) situational, e.g., costs and resources; and 3) organizational, e.g., structural and legal. He further indicates that these barriers exist for students, educational institutions, state governments and other agencies. This complicates and compounds the barrier phenomenon, particularly in a rural area where post-secondary institutions are not readily accessible.

A conclusion drawn from the study in Iowa conducted by the Educational Testing Service (7) was that rural residents indicated possible interest in learning, however, they recognized that significant barriers exist. The report states that 64% couldn't decide what way of learning was best for them. Does this mean, then, that they are not interested in continuing to learn? The study concluded that it did, at least in formal programs.

In a study conducted in California (23) it was found that a potential 8.4 million of that state's 14.7 million adults desired further learning. When asked why they had not become involved in formal learning activities, many responded that they had difficulty in locating educational opportunities; other lacked individual assessment and counseling. The report concluded that there were less opportunities for formal education and counseling services in rural areas.

Most of the previous studies cited (7, 11, 12, 13, 18, 19, 21) concerning participation in formal education indicated that a majority of the part-time participants in post-secondary education had some prior college experience. In addition, most of those adults possessing prior college experience were also characterized as urban residents. When one looks at a rural area for comparative data, the contrast is significant. In the nine-county area of West Central Minnesota analyzed for this study, the percentage of adults over age 25 possessing a high school diploma is 48.2%. In other words, 51.8% of adults over the age of 25 in this rural area of the state, have not graduated from high school. Coupling this statistic with the great distances between post-secondary institutions and the lack of advising and counseling for adults, one begins to realize the apparent lack of interest in participation in formal programs. Perhaps this allows one to begin to understand the orientation toward practical, non-credit, self-improvement learning experiences that adults in rural areas seem to prefer instead of formal credit.

During the summer of 1976, a survey (6) was conducted of 3,606 households in West Central Minnesota to determine the perceived needs for continuing education by residents of the area. A secondary purpose of the survey was to determine what, if any, barriers exist that keep people from enrolling in continuing education programs. The author served as a consultant to the study team from the University of Minnesota. According to the results of the survey, 1,059 respondents out of a total of 3,630 (29.2%) indicated significant barriers existed which prevented their further attendance in educational programs. Table 9 shows these perceived barriers.

Table 9. Perceived Barriers to Access to Further Education by Residents of West Central Minnesota.

Perceived Barrier	Number	%
Requirement of job	386	36.5
Distance (too far)	346	32.7
Family obligations	307	28.9
Inconvenient time program offered	284	26.9
Cost too high and lacked finances	192	18.1
Not informed	155	14.0

Source: Perceived Needs for Education Beyond High School by Residents of Minnesota's West Central Economic Development Region. West Central Development Commission, Fergus Falls, Minnesota 1976.

In a research study conducted in 1975 in a similar region of West Central Minnesota, Marienau (17) found that potential adult learners stated they experienced and perceived access barriers to continued learning. She identified five barriers:

1. access (distance to educational facilities)
2. family responsibilities
3. finances (lack of)
4. time (lack of)
5. motivation (lack of, including lack of supportive assistance from within the family unit)

Kanun (11), in her study comparing University of Minnesota Twin Cities and Morris area participants' characteristics, found that 43% of the Extension classes students (credit courses) in the Twin Cities received tuition assistance from their employers. Only 5% of the participants in evening classes in the Morris area received assistance from their employers.

From this brief review of the literature, one quickly sees that access barriers that exist for many rural adults may not exist as equally for urban adults, especially when participation in formal educational programs is concerned.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps the literature on adult learning experiences in rural (and urban) areas can best be summarized by the following statements.

1. Frequency of Participation

   a. There appears to be no general concensus in the literature to support the premise that adult learning takes place in formal settings at about the same frequency in rural and urban areas, at least within the context of formal credit programs; however, there appears to be no general concensus that it does not. According to NCES data more participation occurs in urban areas, however the proportion of total participation in rural areas is increasing.

   b. Several isolated studies strongly suggest that adults in rural areas do participate more frequently in non-credit programs.

   c. There appears to be substantial evidence indicating that participation in learning activities in both rural and urban settings is most heavily concentrated in age categories of below age 55.

2. Focus of Learning Efforts

   a. There appears to be general support for the thesis that in urban areas the focus of adult learners is on formal credit, whereas, in rural areas adults tend to focus their efforts upon non-credit activities.

   b. Education for vocational advancement seems to be the primary interest for adults in urban areas, whereas, education for personal development and self-improvement seem to be the motivating factors for adults in rural areas.

3. Barriers Experienced

   a. There is general concensus that significant barriers exist more often for rural adults that indeed prevent their pursuit of continued learning.

   b. There is general concensus that the most serious barriers are: access to educational programs (distance), lack of adequate finances, and lack of adequate advising and counseling.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was the intention of this study to report the findings for their relevance to adult education administration, practice and policy. Factors to consider are program development, resource allocation, marketing, financing and evaluation.

1. Program Development. The results of this study seem to recommend that adult education programs in rural areas should be developed with a strong emphasis upon self-improvement and personal development and probably non-credit in nature.
2. Resource Allocation. If the emphasis of rural adult education programs is on self-improvement and non-credit in nature, then the faculty chosen to teach should be pragmatic in their approach and selected for their ability to relate to the clientele, and not selected only on the basis of academic credentials.
3. Marketing. Personal and developmental needs of adults constantly change. The rural adult education "marketplace" is extremely fluid and programs should constantly be modified to reflect changing needs.
4. Financing. Most adults participating in self-improvement programs pay their own tuition and costs--so program costs should be kept minimal to encourage greater attendance.
5. Evaluation. Formal credit, grades and evaluation reports will be less meaningful to adults participating in non-credit, self-improvement programs. Affective level growth will be as important to measure as cognitive level growth.

SUMMARY

This study reflects an initial effort by the author in comparing the world of adult learning in rural and urban settings. It is reported in the context of ongoing inquiry and points to areas for further research. It focused on rural areas, and indicates that adults in rural areas are indeed interested in continued learning, however, they do face significant barriers. Perhaps one needs to look at the literature of rural sociology to better understand rural adults' needs for continued learning. This could be the focus for further research.

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